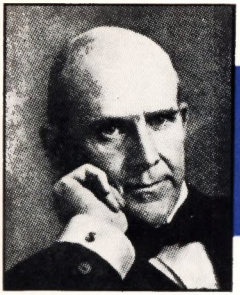

# DEBS

# HAYWOOD

# RUTHENBERG

By ELIZABETH GURLEY FLYNN

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# Debs, Haywood, Ruthenberg

BY

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# Debs, Haywood, Ruthenberg

FOUNDERS-TO-BE of the World of Tomorrow, which will be *Socialism in America,* three of the most memorable leaders of class-conscious workers of yesterday, Eugene Victor Debs, William D. Haywood and Charles E. Ruthenberg, are honored and revered today. Many thousands were fortunately privileged to know their heroic lives. Others must learn of them through our memory of them.

Eugene V. Debs, a magnificent orator, led the advanced group in the earlier Socialist Party. William D. Haywood was a labor organizer and strike leader in the stormy days of the Western Federation of Miners, and the I.W.W. (Industrial Workers of the World). Charles E. Ruthenberg, a Socialist, became the outstanding founder and first Secretary of the Communist Party of the U.S.A.

Debs died in 1926, Ruthenberg in 1927 and Haywood in 1928. The day of the radio and loudspeaker had not arrived, yet their voices resounded to millions through the tremendous mass agitation they carried on. The golden voice of Debs which poured out of his long lean throat like liquid flame; the heavy sledge hammer blows of Haywood's against the "parasites" who exploit the toiler; the incisive swordlike logic of Ruthenberg's campaigns against the imperialist war, and constant admonitions to "Build the Party," are difficult to describe in cold type. Their deep sincerity and earnestness; their devotion to the cause of the workers; the warmth and kindliness of their personalities; their self-sacrifice and the suffering they endured in arrests, trials, imprisonment; their iron resistance to the onslaughts of the enemy, their burning hatred of poverty and exploita-

tion—made of these three American working class fighters, in the words of Marx, *"mortal enemies of capitalism."*

Debs was the greatest of agitators, in a country where they abound; Haywood was the militant leader of spontaneous strikes of unorganized workers in the East, following his earlier colorful career among the hard-rock miners of the West; Ruthenberg foresaw as a Left-wing Socialist, and helped to organize as a Communist, the political forces, to realize "the dream" of Debs, and to accomplish the "industrial democracy" of Haywood.

They were not *"outside* agitators," nor were they "prophets without honor." Each of them began his labor activities in the immediate vicinity of his birthplace. They became Socialists through the conditions of labor they saw and experienced in Midwest America. Their socialism grew out of the soil of this country, its rich natural resources, its mechanical development, its technical skill, the militant traditions and struggle of its people and their ability to produce plenty for all.

Jefferson, Washington and Franklin, the statesman, the warrior and the astute diplomat, met the conditions of 1776. Debs, Haywood and Ruthenberg expressed a later need for an expanded democracy on a basis of socialization of the means of life of all the people, lest the "right of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" become a moss-grown epitaph on the graves of the forefathers.

They were not strictly contemporaries, rather their lives dovetailed to cover approximately three-quarters of a century. Debs was born in Indiana, in 1855, before the Civil War, of French Alsatian parents, who came here in a sailing ship in 1849. Haywood was born of Scotch-Irish pioneer stock in Utah, in 1869, before a railroad spanned the continent. Ruthenberg was born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1882, of German parentage.

Debs was twenty-six when Ruthenberg was born. He was

employed as a railroad fireman and was a member of a union.

Haywood's father died when he was three; as a lad of nine, he was apprenticed to a farmer, "a boy of all work" for $1.50 a month. He stopped one day to look at a nest of field mice and the farmer beat him. "I pulled my first strike then and there," Big Bill used to say with a chuckle. Bill lost the sight of one eye when a knife slipped while he was cutting a sling shot. He disliked school because the boys called him "Dick Dead-Eye." So at fifteen he started out for Nevada, the world of "miners, cowboys, and Indians."

Debs, one of ten children, went to work at fourteen, painting cars; at the age of sixteen, a tall, overgrown, thoughtful youth, he was firing a freight engine. "Lantern in hand, he went out over the unballasted prairie railroad." Thus he learned the needs of the early railroaders.

Debs and Haywood grew up in a country where child labor was common. They were all children of men who worked. Deb's father ran a small grocery store, young Gene was his only helper. Haywood's father was a soldier in the Civil War, a pony-express driver on the Western plains, and a miner. His step-father was a miner. Ruthenberg's father was a longshoreman. Little is recorded of their mothers; they were hard-working women, one may judge by the loving words spoken by their sons, in appreciation of their toil and anxieties.

All were self-educated. Ruthenberg had some basic education, in a German Lutheran grammar school. He worked in a factory while going to a business college; was a clerk, manager of a newspaper; auditor in a factory. He had executive ability of a high order. If he had been indifferent to the interests of his class, willing to use his keen intelligence to climb on the bent shoulders of the workers, he might have become a successful business man, a member of

the ruling class. But Charles Ruthenberg was made of better, sterner stuff. At twenty-eight he became, and for ten years remained, organizer and secretary of the Socialist Party in his birthplace, Cleveland, Ohio.

These three workers were widely read, well versed in literature, grounded in science. A woman reporter in Lawrence, Mass., in 1912, expressed great surprise when she found Haywood reading *Tristram Shandy*. She expected to find "a big, two-fisted thug," as the Hearst editor in Boston had described him. Incidentally, she lost her job when she refused to confirm this.

In jail at Boise, Idaho, awaiting trial, Haywood studied law.

In their attainment of a real education, through carefully selected and coordinated systematic reading, they were pioneers in "workers' education." They demonstrated what young workers can do, when they are determined to open the doors of accumulated knowledge to themselves to help their class. The history of the proletarian class across the ages, and finally the writings of Marx and Engels, were known to them. The writings of Lenin were just becoming available in English, when their studies were interrupted by death. But such as came to our shores, right after the Russian Revolution, were eagerly welcomed.

Haywood said of the Russian Revolution in 1917, "Here is what we have been dreaming about! Here's the I.W.W. all feathered up!"

Debs declared publicly, to rebuke Socialist Party critics of the Revolution, "I am a Bolshevik from the crown of my head to the tips of my toes!"

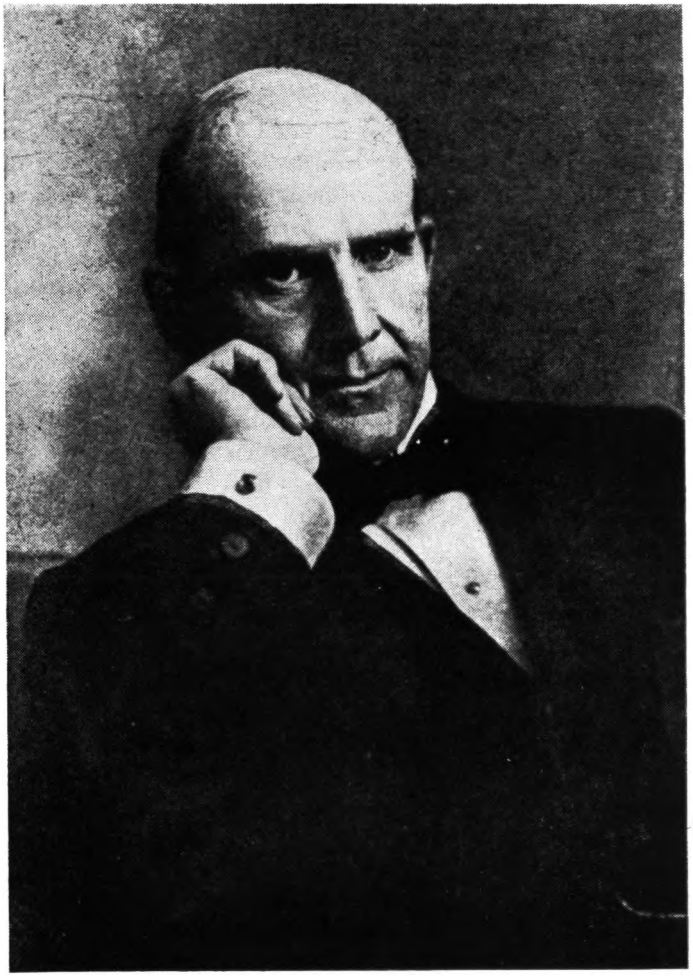
Ruthenberg led the active Left-wing movement to wrest leadership from the reformist Socialists, as Lenin did on an international scale, and Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg did in Germany.

Haywood, like many of us, had strayed for eight years

into what William Z. Foster aptly calls "the arid desert of syndicalism." He returned to his original path of revolutionary socialism by joining the Communist Party of America, in 1920.

Debs unfortunately yielded to the persuasion of his omnipresent "friends" and decided to reserve final judgment on the new Party until he was released from Atlanta Penitentiary, in 1921. Broken in health, he could not overcome the terrible effects of imprisonment at his advanced age, and was ill almost continually for five years.

A careful review of the speeches and statements of Eugene V. Debs makes clear that he belongs, with Haywood and Ruthenberg, to the best revolutionary traditions of the American working class. On the twentieth anniversary of the Communist Party of the U.S.A. it is appropriate to review, at least briefly, their inspiring lives and work, to keep fresh and green their memories, which belong to us today, and which we bring to the workers of America.



EUGENE V. DEBS

# Eugene V. Debs

*"One of the best loved leaders of the American proletariat, Eugene V. Debs. I am not surprised that this fearless man was thrown in prison by the American bourgeoisie."—V. I. Lenin.*

TO HEAR Eugene V. Debs speak on any occasion was an unforgettable experience. He was a matchless orator. No one who heard Debs came away entirely unaffected. People who came merely from curiosity were held spellbound by his torrent of burning eloquence. He exemplified Wendell Phillips' advice on how to be a speaker, "Be so full of your subject that you flow over like a pitcher!" Debs paced back and forth on the platform, like a lion ready to spring, then leaned far over the edge, his tall gaunt frame bending like a reed, his long bony finger pointing—his favorite gesture. His deep blue eyes appeared to look searchingly at each one in the audience, he seemed to be speaking directly to each individual. Such intimate eloquence is hardly possible in this era of mechanized speech. Debs' voice was strong and clear and could be heard in the largest hall and outdoor places. He spoke with imagery and poetry of expression, drew word pictures of the lives of the workers, of child labor, of men in prison, or at war. He was full of loving kindness of those who are heavily laden, and had a searing contempt for "gory-beaked vultures" who fatten on their exploitation. His strong sense of labor solidarity never wavered. He responded to appeals from the most obscure workers.

I met him in the small town of Minersville, Pa., where we spoke together, on an old wagon, to the daughters of the

miners who were engaged in a textile strike. He had been lecturing in the state. We telegraphed asking him to come to encourage the strikers, hardly expecting him, as we were quite far away. I have a precious snapshot of 'Gene Debs leaning eagerly out over the tail of the wagon in his characteristic pose, smiling encouragement to those young girl strikers. No audience in a great auditorium of a metropolitan city heard a more beautiful and moving speech than 'Gene Debs delivered that day thirty years ago in the Anthracite.

He was *an agitator,* born of the first national awakening of American labor. The shame of servitude and the glory of struggle were emblazoned in the mind of every worker who heard Debs. The first definition of agitator was given when Pontius Pilate called for the accusation against "this just man" and the bloodthirsty howl went up: "Crucify him—he stirreth up the people!" Debs did stir the people, because of his deep roots in them.

When he was twenty, Debs became a charter member of a trade union, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, and was made Secretary of the Terre Haute local. Old Josh Leach, the founder of the Brotherhood, remarked in St. Louis a few days after, "I put a tow-headed boy in the Brotherhood in Terre Haute not long ago, and some day he will be at the head of it." One of the few boasts Debs made was that he never missed a union meeting in ten years. In 1880, when he was twenty-five, he became General Secretary-Treasurer of the national union.

Debs describes his life at that time:

> "My grip was always packed; and I was darting in all directions. To tramp through a railroad yard in the rain, snow or sleet half the night, or till daybreak, to be ordered out of the roundhouse for being an 'agitator,' or put off a train, sometimes passenger, more often freight, while attempting to deadhead over the di-

vision, were all in the program, and served to whet the appetite to conquer. I rode on engines over mountain and plains, slept in the cabooses and bunks and was fed from their pails by the swarthy stokers. Through all these years I was nourished at *Fountain Proletaire*. I drank deeply of its waters and every particle of my tissue became saturated with the spirit of the working class. I had fired an engine and been stung by the exposure and hardship of the rail. I was with the boys in the weary watches, at the broken engine's side, and often helped to bear their bruised and bleeding bodies back to wife and child again. How could I but feel the burden of their wrongs? How could the seed of *agitation* fail to take deep root in my heart?"

The nationwide railroad strikes of the late 'seventies particularly affected the Middle West. This spurred him to organize not only his own craft but all others on the roads. His union, which had sixty lodges and a $6,000 debt when he started, soon had 226 lodges and no debts. He organized brakemen, switchmen, telegraphers, shopmen, trackmen. In 1893 he organized the first industrial union of railroad workers in this country, the American Railway Union.

He gave up his $4,000 a year salary with the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen to work for $75 a month for the "unification of all railroad employees for their mutual benefit and protection." The new organization successfully won a struggle on the Great Northern Railroad—97½ per cent of their demands—a monthly increase of $146,000 in wages.

In 1894, the American Railway Union entered into a life and death conflict—a sympathetic strike in defense of the Pullman Company shop workers who struck against a wage-cut. Federal troops were sent in by President Cleveland to break the strike, over the protest of Governor Altgeld of Illinois. Sweeping injunctions were issued by

the federal courts. Debs and the other strike leaders were arrested. They were held in the old Cook County Jail, in Chicago, now happily torn down. Charges of conspiracy, treason and murder simmered down to violating the injunctions.

Debs served six months in Woodstock County Jail. Here, he says "Socialism gradually laid hold of me in its own irresistible fashion." A volume of Marx's *Capital* and other Socialist books were brought to him in jail. Debs was never anti-political, although then he was absorbed in union affairs. He had been City Clerk of Terre Haute for four years, elected on the Democratic ticket, and a member of the Indiana legislature in 1885. The defeat of the A.R.U. by troops, courts, and the 3,600 United States deputy marshals (who rode the trains to "protect the mails") marked the beginning of Debs as a Socialist leader. "I was baptized in socialism, in the roar of the conflict," he said. He devoted the balance of his life to it.

He served as a special organizer in 1897, in the West for both the United Mine Workers and the Western Federation of Miners. After that he concentrated on politics. He organized the Social-Democracy of America in 1897. In 1900 this group joined with a section which split away from the Socialist Labor Party, and formed the Socialist Party. Debs was the Presidential standard bearer of the Socialist Party in five campaigns from 1900 to 1920. In 1920 he polled 920,000 votes while "silenced" in Atlanta Penitentiary.

When Debs declined to run in 1916, the S.P. lost over 300,000 votes, which indicates that Debs was the natural leader of the party. Yet the party officials deliberately isolated him. They created the impression that Debs was only a great heart and voice but that they were the brains. Such was not the case. It was because he took a more advanced position on trade union work, working class political ac-

tion, immigration, labor defense, the war, the Russian Revolution and the Soviet government. Alexander Trachtenberg, speaking from twenty years' personal observation, says:

"On many occasions Debs was in open conflict with the S.P. leadership. Although considered as such, Debs really was never the political leader of the party. He represented perhaps the greatest peculiarity in the American Socialist movement. Considered by the rank and file as the personification of the fighting spirit of socialism and looked upon by the outside world as the outstanding personality in the American Socialist movement, Debs never wrote a platform for the party, never sat on its executive committee, except for the last two or three years of his life when he was brought in more for window dressing, never was sent as a delegate to a national or international convention, never was permitted to participate in the councils of the party to formulate policies and work out tactics. The leadership of the S.P. studiously avoided bringing Debs into the organization. He was kept on the platform where his eloquence was capitalized, or he was allowed to write in fugitive and privately-owned Socialist journals rather than in the official organs of the party.

"The S.P. leadership feared Debs' revolutionary attitude on the burning questions which agitated the membership of the party. . . . Debs should have never permitted himself to be placed in such a position by the S.P. leaders. His place was among the proletarian members, guarding the party against the reformist leaders and guiding the membership in his own spirit of militancy. *He should have been the political leader of the party* instead of letting that leadership fall into the hands of lawyers and ministers." *

Like a caged lion, he roared occasionally at his role as a

* Introduction to *Speeches of Eugene V. Debs,* p. 14, International Publishers, New York.

captive celebrity. On several historic issues he broke loose. So today workers remember Debs while those who tried to hold his mighty spirit in leash are forgotten. Debs was a logical forerunner of the Communist Party.

In an article "Danger Ahead" (1911) Debs warned against the party losing its working class character. He objected (1910) to the party accepting the American Federation of Labor policy of excluding immigrants; he was a signer of the I.W.W. manifesto (1905) and advocated organizing the unorganized when the S.P. official position was "neutrality" on the trade unions. He advocated industrial unionism and opposed kowtowing to the reactionary American Federation of Labor craft leaders. He pointed out that *"No politics in the unions"* was a farce, that Gompers was not opposed to politics (he was a master at the game), but to independent working class political action.

Sometimes Debs was confused theoretically but he could be depended upon in all major issues, guided instinctively by his class-consciousness. In 1907, thirty years after their execution, when the name of the "Molly Maguires" was still spoken in whispers, Debs wrote of them as "the first martyrs to the class struggle in the United States."

He wrote of the Haymarket martyrs of 1887, "these leaders of labor paid the penalty of their loyalty. This judicial massacre constitutes the blackest page in American history!"

His famous editorial "Arouse Ye Slaves!" in the *Appeal to Reason* on March 10, 1906, was a call to action for Moyer, Haywood, Pettibone who were accused of murder in Idaho.

"If the plutocrats begin the program we will finish it!" he cried, to the horror of his pussyfooting advisers. He passionately defended Mooney and Billings, Joe Hill, the I.W.W., Sacco and Vanzetti.

The speech which he made in Canton, Ohio, on June 16,

1918, during the World War, in defense of Charles E. Ruthenberg, Alfred Wagenknecht and Charles Baker resulted in his arrest on the charge of violating the Espionage Act. He had just visited his imprisoned comrades in the nearby jail. He said "I am proud of them. They are there for us and we are here for them." He reiterated his opposition to the capitalists' war. He was guided by the principles of international socialism. *Debs was not a pacifist.* He said clearly:

> "No, I am not opposed to fighting under all circumstances, and any declaration to the contrary would disqualify me as a revolutionist. . . . I am opposed to every war but one; I am for that war with heart and soul and that is the world-wide war of the social revolution."

He said further:

> "While I have not a drop of blood to shed for the oppressors of the working class and the robbers of the poor, the thieves, and looters, the brigands and murderers, whose debauched misrule is the crime of the ages, I have a heart full to shed for their victims when it shall be needed in the war for their liberation."

This, he believed, "is where the Socialist Party ought to stand on war." He gave his great heart fearlessly. He addressed the world, through the jury, for two hours on September 12, 1918, was found guilty and sentenced to ten years. When his sentence was affirmed by the U.S. Supreme Court he said:

> "I have no concern with what a coterie of begowned corporation lawyers in Washington may decide. The court of final resort is the people, and that court will be heard from in due time."

At the age of 65, five months after the Armistice was signed, and in delicate health, he was sent to prison in

Moundsville, West Virginia. He was removed to Atlanta Penitentiary because there were fears that he would be liberated by the miners of the area. On entering prison, he said, "I enter the prison doors a flaming revolutionist—my head erect, my spirit untamed, and my soul unconquerable!" He was in prison over two years, was finally pardoned by President Harding but without restoration of citizenship.

The Left-wing split from the Socialist Party and the organization of the Communist Party took place while Debs was in prison. Possibly if Debs had been outside he would have left the party whose degeneration he had foreseen, and taken his place, where he logically belonged, with the Left-wing forces who organized the Communist Party.

The Russian Revolution was greeted by Debs as "the greatest in point of historic significance and far-reaching influence in the annals of the human race."

When he was nominated for the Presidency in 1920 he told the Socialist Party Notification Committee who came to Atlanta, "I heartily support the Russian Revolution without reservations."

After his arrest, before his trial, he sent "Greetings to our Russian Comrades," on the occasion of the first anniversary of the Revolution. On November 7, 1920, while he was in Atlanta Penitentiary, he wrote: "Greetings on the third anniversary of the Russian Revolution. The emancipation of Russia and the establishment of the Workers' Republic is an inspiration to the workers of the world." He explained: "There is no autocracy in the rule of the masses," even though he was not clear on Lenin's conception of the state and the *proletarian* dictatorship. He had the correct instinct to insist that: "During the revolutionary period, the revolution must protect itself."

Debs once wrote that: "The most heroic word in all

languages is revolution." He wanted to be counted always as a revolutionist. He joined the Friends of the Soviet Union and the International Labor Defense when he came out of prison, in spite of the Socialist Party boycott. Until his death he defended the Bolsheviks and the Soviet Union. He died October 20, 1926, after a long illness.

He did not consider himself a leader in a personal sense. He said:

> "If you are looking for a Moses to lead you out of this capitalist wilderness you will stay right where you are. I would not lead you into the promised land if I could, because if *I* could lead you in, somebody else could lead you out. You must use your heads as well as your hands and get yourselves out of your present condition; as it is now, the capitalists use your heads and your hands."

We admire and love Eugene V. Debs, great agitator, and "American Bolshevik," as he so proudly called himself.

WILLIAM D. HAYWOOD

# William D. Haywood

*"Debs was the greatest agitator of the American labor movement but Haywood was its outstanding fighter. With unerring instinct Haywood knew the enemies of his class and fought them without giving or asking quarter."—William Z. Foster, "From Bryan to Stalin."*

"BIG BILL" HAYWOOD, he was affectionately called by the workers. He personified strength and he belonged to them. He was their Big Bill. He first heard of unionism from an old Irish miner, member of the Knights of Labor, who belonged to a pioneer hard-ore miners' union in Virginia City, Nevada, in 1867. The lad of fifteen was surprised to learn that "the boss" who slept in the same bunkhouse was only a hired hand and that the real owners lived in idle luxury far away.

In 1887, he read of the Haymarket hangings (Parsons, Spies, Engel and Fischer). Through this infamous frame-up his class-consciousness was stirred. *"It was a turning point in my life!"* he said. Twenty years later, in Idaho, he was to be the central figure in the next great labor frame-up trial. Thirty years later, in 1917, he was to be incarcerated for many months in the Cook County jail in Chicago, where the martyrs of the struggle for the eight-hour day were hanged.

Haywood's life in the West reads like an adventure story. He was a cowboy, he "homesteaded" (cleared government land, to gain title). Here in the wilderness his wife had her first baby, attended only by Bill, with a doctor book for guide. He was in gold rushes, and knew the Indian tribes.

He tells of attempts in 1894 to stop all trains, to help the railroad strike in Chicago. In Winnemucca, Nevada, the militia refused to mobilize. "Most of them were railroad men to whom the militia was a social affair." Here he first heard of Debs.

In 1896 in Idaho, he attended his first union mass meeting of the Western Federation of Miners, organized three years before in Butte, Montana, and conceived by Ed. Boyce and thirteen strikers in the Ada County Jail in Idaho. Strangely enough, Haywood, as a union official of the Western Federation of Miners, was to be held in that very jail for eighteen months, just ten years later, awaiting trial.

The Federation was an industrial union, including every man in and around the mine and the mill. This was the militant organization which had carried on the great strikes in the Coeur d'Alenes, Idaho (where the "bullpen" was built to imprison the miners), and the strikes of Telluride, Leadville and Cripple Creek, Colorado.

Haywood joined Silver City Miners Union No. 66 (Idaho), on August 10, 1896. Like Debs he was proud he never missed a meeting of his local. At twenty-seven years of age he was elected an officer.

In 1898, he returned to Salt Lake City, Utah, his birthplace, to attend his first W. F. of M. convention. Copper, gold, silver, and lead miners from Arizona, Nevada, Utah, Idaho, Colorado, Montana, South Dakota and British Columbia were there. Plans were made to carry on the struggle for an eight-hour day, the abolition of the contract system, and to control the dangerous power drills which were called "widow-makers." Within the year, 1,200 members of the union were in jail and martial law prevailed throughout the Rocky Mountain states. Haywood was elected to the Executive Board of the W. F. of M., and in 1900 became its Secretary-Treasurer. Headquarters were moved to Denver, Colorado. He "turned off the air

on the machine drill for the last time" and took up his life's task of serving his fellow-miners. He did it well.

The next year he met Eugene V. Debs, who spoke to the miners' convention on socialism. Haywood joined the Socialist Party and the principles of socialism were adopted by the W. F. of M. At this convention Vincent St. John as president of the Telluride Miners' Union reported on the *first sit-down strike in America* where "the miners were in peaceful possession of the mines" up in the hills.

The Mine Owners Association, organized by John Hays Hammond, fought the miners bitterly in 1903 and 1904 through the courts, with militia and gunmen, especially when the union extended to the smeltermen. But the union grew, won many of its hard fought struggles and had 27,000 members by 1905. The Federation engaged vigorously in local political campaigns against governors and sheriffs who fought labor. They ran their own candidates and in some places they were elected. Haywood was in the heat of every struggle, and was arrested and assaulted innumerable times. He bore many saber marks on his body of battles with militiamen. He was courageous to a fault. He shook only from rage.

Out of the W. F. of M. convention in 1904 a call came which brought into existence its famous offspring the I.W.W. Haywood was on the committee which drew up the manifesto for a convention in June, 1905. Famous signatures were those of Eugene V. Debs. Mother Jones, the only woman among representatives of metal, railroad, brewing and the miners' unions. Contrary to general belief Daniel De Leon was not a signer and came in later. The I.W.W. was a child of the West and Bill Haywood, not De Leon, can be designated its "father."

Haywood was chairman of the first convention in Chicago which he called "The Continental Congress of the Working Class." Lucy Parsons, widow of Albert Parsons,

Haymarket martyr, sat on the platform. The original preamble called on "all the toilers to come together on the political as well as on the industrial field," "to abolish the wage system." Practically all the delegates who launched the I.W.W. were Socialists.

Within six months, Charles Moyer, William D. Haywood and George Pettibone, President, Secretary and Treasurer of the Western Federation of Miners, were arrested at night in Denver, Colorado, and rushed on a special train to Idaho, where they were charged with the murder of ex-Governor Stuenenberg. This was one of the most famous labor cases in America. Undoubtedly their participation in setting up the I.W.W. was an important factor in this frame-up. The kidnapping without extradition and the use of a "stool pigeon" witness, Harry Orchard, who was drilled by James McParland, head of the Colorado Pinkerton detective agency, aroused nationwide indignation. McParland was the same evil spy who as "McKenna" had lied away the lives of nineteen Irish-American coal miners in the Anthracite, thirty years before. The gallows snuffed out those young lives, but the workers remember the cruel injustice. Through powerful solidarity, they vindicated and liberated Haywood, Moyer and Pettibone, the latter who died shortly after of tuberculosis. This in spite of the fact that President Theodore Roosevelt abused his high office to denounce them (as well as Debs who defended them) as "undesirable citizens." Orchard, who confessed to many crimes, was sentenced to life in the Idaho Penitentiary, where he is now supposed to be.

On Haywood's tour around the country, arranged by the Socialist Party after his acquittal, his ringing declaration evoked astonishment and then enthusiasm, when he said, "I am a two-gun man from the West!" He reached into one pocket and then the other, producing his Socialist Party card and his union card.

He was elected to the National Committee of the Socialist Party in the 1908 convention, spoke in the campaign with 'Gene Debs and Tom Mooney on the "Red Special" which toured the country. He was elected a delegate to the Copenhagen Congress of the Second International in 1910 by a larger vote than any other delegate. There he met Lenin.

The Western Federation had withdrawn from the I.W.W. On his return from a triumphal European tour, Haywood elected to remain with the I.W.W. He felt by 1911 that "it was now writing history of its own." The I.W.W. had amended its preamble to be *non*-political, mainly to offset the attempts of De Leon to tie the I.W.W. to the Socialist Labor Party. It was not the intention of those who amended it to make the I.W.W. *anti*-political. Many differences of interpretation arose. The opposition of the lawyers, ex-preachers and small business elements who controlled the Socialist Party increased as the I.W.W.'s meteoric career progressed. The predominance of foreign-speaking immigrant workers in the East, not yet naturalized, and native born migratory workers of the West, who were unable to vote, tended to make the I.W.W. anti-political. The disfranchisement of women and the Negro people added arguments. Direct action, the general strike and, unfortunately, sabotage came to the fore in I.W.W. propaganda.

Theory and practice were in conflict, however. As Haywood pointed out:

> "The history of the I.W.W. has shown the significance of political action. While there are some members who decry legislative action and who refuse to cast a ballot for any political party, yet the I.W.W. fought more political battles for the working class than any other labor organization—for free speech, against vagrancy laws, against criminal syndicalist laws and to establish the right of workers to organize. They have

gone on strike for men in prison. It is to the ignominy of the Socialist Party and the Socialist Labor Party that they so seldom joined forces with the I.W.W. in these desperate political struggles."

Haywood's leadership and his ability to adapt himself to the needs of the workers were magnificently demonstrated in the I.W.W. Lawrence textile strike of 1912 and the Paterson silk and Akron rubber strikes of 1913. It left his co-workers unforgettable memories of Big Bill surrounded by stunted, undernourished little ones at the children's meetings; of his tender sympathetic appeals at the women's meetings; of his simple, plain, language, and his gestures. He used to hold up his hand with fingers outspread to illustrate craft unionism and then close and raise high his mighty fist to illustrate industrial unionism. "Organize not like that—but like this!" he said. The latest comer from Europe could understand him! His gigantic frame and one eye gave him the appearance of a sinister Cyclops but his face lit up with kindliness in talking to workers.

In the midst of these strikes the Socialist Party convention expelled Haywood from its National Committee for advocating sabotage. It was, as Foster states, "the poorest possible issue for the Left wing to defend" but "Bill Haywood. the revolutionary fighter, was worth several carloads of the opportunist intellectuals who were running and ruining the Socialist Party."

Haywood, like Debs, was a revolutionary *Socialist*. It was not of his choosing that he was outside of the party, and when the Communist Party was formed it was logical for him to rejoin. Haywood was never an anarchist, nor did he consider himself a "syndicalist" in the European sense. His anti-parliamentarism was largely a reaction to the opportunist policies of the Socialist Party leadership.

Haywood exerted a strong influence on Jack Reed who

came as a reporter to Paterson, was jailed, stayed to fight, and produced the beautiful "Pageant" of the strike in Madison Square Garden.

Haywood's strong physique began to break in the Paterson strike. The I.W.W. elected him Secretary-Treasurer, to replace Vincent St. John who had served gallantly through eight long years. Bill expected some rest and a more regular life, but struggles came thick and hard—the fight for Ford and Suhr in California; the campaign to save Joe Hill, song writer of the I.W.W., the strike on the Mesabe Range; the Mooney-Billings case; the Everett (Wash.), massacre of five workers and trial of Tom Tracey; the struggle of the oil workers and the Kreiger case in Oklahoma; and finally the life and death struggle when the United States entered the World War in 1917.

The Industrial Workers of the World were not "pacifists." They were opposed to a "rich man's war." They continued their strike activities for more wages and shorter hours. In July, in Arizona, occurred the fiendish deportation of 1,162 miners into the burning desert.

In August, in Butte, Mont., Frank Little, crippled I.W.W. organizer of the copper strikers, was beaten, dragged by an auto and lynched on a railroad trestle.

In September, the I.W.W. met the full impact of wartime persecution. Wholesale raids and arrests were made. The famous case, called "William D. Haywood *et al,*" included one hundred and thirteen defendants. The trial under the Espionage Act lasted five months; the jury brought in a blanket verdict of "guilty" in less than two hours. Haywood was sentenced to twenty years. He and St. John were handcuffed together, on the special train to Leavenworth. He was released on bail in July, 1919, and worked indefatigably for bail and defense. But when the Supreme Court in 1920 decided adversely on the appeal, Haywood did not return to prison. He had sought

refuge as a political exile in the Soviet Union, where he died in May, 1928.

His departure for Russia unfortunately widened the breach between the Communists and the I.W.W. His reasons for going were understandable. As the principal leader of the I.W.W. he was sure to be held the rest of his days in prison. He believed that, with himself eliminated, it would be easier to secure the release of the other defendants. At this time he was fatally ill with diabetes. Approaching sixty, he wanted really to see a free workers' country before he died.

He was treated with the greatest consideration and respect in the Soviet Union. He occupied himself as long as his health permitted in the Kusbas, leading and inspiring the pioneer group, including many American members of the I.W.W., which helped to opened up the coal fields and iron ore mines that today feed the great steel works at Kusnetzk. But he longed for the land of baseball and burlesque, big steaks and cigars, cowboys and rodeos, strikes and picket lines, to see the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains, the America which was his home. He was flesh and blood of America, he belonged here, in its militant struggles against capitalism. He was not well enough to start a new life in a young country. His once strong body was broken, his great vitality spent, in the American class struggle.

When the tired heart stopped in 1928, after a paralytic stroke, his ashes were divided. Half are buried at the Kremlin wall with Jack Reed's, and the other half in Waldheim Cemetery in Chicago with the Haymarket martyrs.

The hard-ore miners of the West are organized today in the C.I.O. International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers. They held their convention in Butte, Montana, last year. The President of Butte Miners' Union No. 1, in opening their "thirty-fifth convention," said it

was some twenty-seven years since a convention of *this organization* had been held in Butte, *when it was known as the Western Federation of Miners.*

The ashes of Bill Haywood may be scattered but "His soul goes marching on!" in these 50,000 organized hard-ore miners, in the West. Significantly too, the prophesy of Debs that *"A new organization must be built, with the miners, the leading industrial body at the head of it,"* has come true. It is here in the C.I.O. today.

Debs said of Haywood, "For the very reason that Gompers is glorified by Wall Street, Bill Haywood is despised by Wall Street," for the very reason Gompers will be forgotten, Haywood's memory is green among the workers of America.

In Denver, Colorado, in the very district where Haywood lived and worked is a large and active branch of the Communist Party of the U.S.A. It is called the "William D. Haywood Branch." So Bill Haywood's "two guns"—the industrial union and the revolutionary political party—are not discarded by the workers of the East and West. We love and admire this mighty warrior against capitalism, and commemorate him today, on the twentieth anniversary of the foundation of the Communist Party.

CHARLES E. RUTHENBERG

# Charles E. Ruthenberg

*"Throughout his life, Ruthenberg bore himself as a true soldier of the revolution. His name will live in the annals of the American working class, along with those of other brave fighters."—William Z. Foster.*

A TALL, slender, blonde, blue-eyed young man of thirty-seven, named Charles Emil Ruthenberg, was the outstanding founder of the Communist Party in 1919 at Chicago. He was its National Secretary, except for a short interval when he was in prison, until his sudden death eight years later. His family were German Lutherans. It must be a bitter pill to those who like to fulminate that the Communist Party was founded by "foreigners," to admit that Debs, Haywood and Ruthenberg of yesterday, as Browder and Foster, Bloor and Ford, of today, are all native Americans, and became militant fighters for socialism in the crucible of labor struggles right here in this country.

Ruthenberg's birthplace—Cleveland, Ohio, on Lake Erie—is a maelstrom of manufacturing, heavy industry, transportation. Many immigrants landed there. They were terrifically exploited. Ore docks tie the Mesabe Iron Range to Pittsburgh steel plants; the muddy Cuyahoga River coils like a brown snake in the heart of this industrial center.

It is regrettable that Ruthenberg did not live long enough to write his biography. We would then know of his boyhood in the 'nineties, and his young manhood at the turn of the century, what experiences started him on the path to socialism.

This Midwest city where he spent his impressionable years was the home town of Mark Hanna, the coal baron who bought himself into the U.S. Senate. Hanna was the financial backer of President McKinley, whose administration launched the U.S. on the era of imperialism in the Spanish-American War, under the guise of "liberating Cuba and the Philippines." Hanna organized the National Civic Federation, "the brotherhood of capital and labor," which snared John Mitchell, a promising young leader of the coal miners, who had neither knowledge nor theory to guide him through the quicksand of capitalist flattery, and became a docile "labor lieutenant of industry." The United Mine Workers of America, however, forced Mitchell to resign his vice-presidency in the Civic Federation.

In Cleveland in the 'nineties an enormous mansion of John D. Rockefeller was back off a deep Euclid Avenue lawn. His oily tentacles stretched far and wide, building a monster monopoly of a great natural resource. These two evil birds of prey were not objects of pride to Cleveland. "Muckrakers" and "trust busters" arose; there was a strong single tax movement, out of which came Mayor Tom L. Johnson, who fought the traction interests and won the three-cent fare. Municipal ownership and government ownership of public resources and utilities were discussed.

The group of the Socialist Labor Party, which had revolted against the dogmatism and the iron rule of De Leon, merged with the Social-Democratic Party of Debs to form the Socialist Party with Debs as its stirring standard bearer.

Cleveland was a live and promising section of the new party when C. E. Ruthenberg joined it in 1909. He was employed as an accountant by the Prince and Biederman Co. He lost his job when he participated in an organizing campaign of the International Ladies Garment Workers'

Union. From 1909 to 1919 he was recording secretary and organizer of the Cleveland City Central Committee. In 1910 he was candidate for State Treasurer; in 1911, 1915, 1917 and 1919 candidate for Mayor of Cleveland; candidate for U.S. Senator and editor of *The Cleveland Socialist* in 1913; candidate for Congress in 1916 and 1918. For ten years, until he became Secretary of the Communist Party, he was an effective campaigner and bold spokesman for the Socialist Party. The Cleveland section under Ruthenberg's guidance was numerically stronger than the whole national Socialist Party was at the time of his death. When the World War began in 1914, he assumed the leadership of the anti-war movement in the Midwest. Around this issue the Left wing took shape.

> "In the formative period (1918-1919) the basic Left group which organized our Party was the Left wing of the Socialist Party, *the outstanding representative of which was Ruthenberg,*" says Alexander Bittelman.

Ruthenberg's national leadership began in April, 1917, at the St. Louis convention of the Socialist Party where the anti-war resolution was the subject of a sharp struggle. Ruthenberg, as Secretary of the Resolutions Committee, and Kate Sadler, a powerful agitator from the Northwest, led the fight for a strong stand, an outright opposition to the war as an imperialist war. The convention was confused. There were pacifists, pro-Germans and pro-allies there. But only five delegates voted for Spargo's pro-war position; 172 voted for the final resolution. Debs and Ruthenberg salvaged this weak anti-war resolution which was finally passed and blew the strong breath of revolutionary life into it; while the Berger-Hillquit leadership did their best to smother it. Ruthenberg was much more clear than Debs in his understanding and fearless interpretation of the theories of Lenin and the victory of the

Russian workers' revolution in 1917, which had overthrown tsarism and capitalism. The successful dictatorship of the proletariat, the establishment of Soviet power, was greeted with greatest enthusiasm by Ruthenberg and the majority of the Socialist Party members whom he represented. The opposition of the party machine to an unequivocal stand against war; to endorsing the Bolshevik position and achievements; to the organization of the Third (Communist) International, caused the organization of the Left wing in 1918. A referendum vote was carried overwhelmingly in the spring of 1919 in favor of sending delegates to the First Congress of the Third International but was deliberately sidetracked by the Socialist Party officials. The Left wing of 1918 was a bridge to the formation of the Communist Party in 1919.

From 1917 on, until his death ten years later, Ruthenberg was one of the most persecuted men in America, constantly under indictment, arrested innumerable times, in jail and prison for long periods, treated roughly and meanly. He served ten months in 1918 in the Canton (Ohio) Workhouse, with Alfred Wagenknecht and Charles Baker.

Ruthenberg was arrested after the terrible May Day riots in Cleveland's Public Square in 1919, when thugs imported from Chicago were hurled at the marchers, police clubbed them unmercifully and troops and armored cars were on call. Three people were killed, including a child. Ruthenberg, Tom Clifford, veteran Ohio Socialist, and others were arrested on a charge of murder, on the "constructive conspiracy" theory which had been established in the Haymarket case. The charge was subsequently dismissed.

In 1920 he was tried and convicted in New York as a Communist under the antiquated Criminal Anarchy Law of New York State and sentenced to from five to ten years.

He served over two years in Sing Sing Prison. At the time of his death he had a five to ten-year sentence in Jackson Penitentiary, Michigan, hanging over him, for participation in the Communist Party convention at Bridgeman in 1922. His appeal was before the U.S. Supreme Court, when death removed him from their jurisdiction in 1927. There were many other minor arrests in Chicago and elsewhere.

Ruthenberg as an agitator and fighter is honored by the militant workers of today. He fought against war, for free speech, for the legal rights of the Communist Party to exist openly. He fought against the police, courts and the ruling class they represented. He went onto the public square of his birthplace over and over again to arouse the masses, to make them politically conscious of their rights and power.

His manner was calm, cool, poised. He did whatever was necessary with dignity and confidence. His voice was deep; his speaking deliberate and deadly in its devastating logic. His disarming courtesy and reticence were swept aside in struggle. The cause of the workers had a courageous, faithful and steadfast champion in Charles E. Ruthenberg.

At present Ruthenberg is not yet as well known as Debs and Haywood. He was not primarily, a platform man, as they were, but an intensive organizer. The work of his last years was building the Party. There are few anecdotes of "C.E." as he was generally called.

C. E. Ruthenberg assumed grave responsibility when he became National Secretary of the Communist Party. He saw clearly that a Communist Party must be a real working class party, must slough off the smug opportunism of the Socialist Party leaders who would make socialism a sugar-coated pill for the palate of the capitalist class; must be able not only to recognize in theory but to participate boldly in the class struggle. His role in welding together

the Left wing forces and later the forces of the Communist Party laid the foundation for our Party of today.

He realized above all the tremendous importance of *organization* to carry out the resolutions and platforms of the new Party, to consolidate the different groups and get them to work together, to build permanently, even under the handicaps of red scares, raids, arrests, and the necessity of building an underground, secret, Party organization for several years. He understood the major task of the Party and undertook to carry it out—to transmute spontaneous and sporadic impulses of the people into conscious, continuous organized effort based upon correct theory. To do this he worked hard.

The outstanding characteristic of C. E. Ruthenberg was an extraordinary and indefatigable capacity *to work*. It is said the busiest people are always the ones who can do something more. "C. E." demonstrated this in practice. He did not make the fatal error which many energetic and industrious people do, of trying to do everything single-handed. In this he was the good executive who could produce results himself but was also able to enlist and enthuse, encourage and inspire others to give their services likewise to the limit.

C. E. Ruthenberg's other outstanding quality was the high *courage* of a fighting heart and a fighting brain. Courage to fight the enemy class, courage to fight against the narrowing influence of sectarianism within the Party, courage to work underground and equal courage to insist that the Party emerge into open activity as quickly as possible.

With this went great simplicity, no bravado, no desire to take unnecessary risks, and after the bravest deeds only a gentle deprecating smile as if to say, "It was really nothing!" This courage was based upon his Marxian conviction that "Theory becomes a material force as soon as

it has gripped the masses," and that "Theory is not a dogma but a guide to action." Bring the Party to the masses was his constant reiteration, win the confidence of the masses!

C. E. Ruthenberg was therefore one of the first American leaders of the *Leninist* type. He had a great admiration for the leaders of the Russian Bolshevik Party and aspired to develop himself into that kind of a leader in America—to be as able, to know as much, to see as clearly, to organize as competently as they had done. Lenin and Stalin were his chosen models.

As a result of this purpose which he charted for himself, Tom Lewis, genial and informal old-time agitator, broke through his surface reserve and called him "Charlie" to his great delight. A co-defendant in Michigan told how Ruthenberg, as the leader, was placed in isolation in the foulest detention pen he had ever seen. When the lawyers' visits allowed them to meet, "C. E." came in smiling, inquiring anxiously about the comfort of the others.

Ruthenberg held the Party together to weather the storms of the Palmer anti-red raids and the vicious deportation and criminal syndicalist persecutions of 1920. He guided it to an even keel as a legal political party, against tendencies within the Party to make a permanent virtue of a temporary necessity — underground organization.

After two decades we recreate in memory those stirring times when the Communist Party was founded in this country. *A Letter to American Workers* by V. I. Lenin had been sent here on August 20, 1918; another to the workers of Europe and America was dated January 21, 1919. There was vast enthusiasm:

". . . for the revolution that was born by the war," Lenin said. "The American people has a revolutionary

tradition adopted by the best representatives of the American proletariat who gave repeated expression to their full solidarity with us, the Bolsheviks. This tradition is the war of liberation against the English in the eighteenth and the Civil War in the nineteenth century." *

This American tradition was carried forward by the Communist Party for what Lenin described as "a far greater task, the work of abolishing capitalist wage slavery and overthrowing the rule of the bourgeoisie."

For a considerable period the Party remained "a numerically small propaganda organization." It had to overcome isolation from the masses in America. It required unification of the two Communist Parties (the Communist Party and the Communist Labor Party), which took place in 1921; it required smashing the barrier of "illegality" before the Communist Party could "develop in the shortest possible time into a mass political party of the American working class." Ruthenberg fought hard, as he wrote on May Day, 1923, "for the Party to publicly advocate the principles of communism and win the support of the workers for these principles."

Ruthenberg hated capitalism, with its squalor and misery; he had faith in the workers. "The working class has the power and to save itself must establish socialism," he said in 1912. He never deviated from this fundamental conviction.

Ruthenberg's experience had been primarily in political activity in the Socialist Party. The closer identification with the trade unions in the immediate daily struggles of the workers, the campaign to organize the unorganized, came through William Z. Foster, leader of

* V. I. Lenin, *A Letter to American Workers*, p. 16, International Publishers, New York.

the great steel strike of 1919, who joined the Communist Party in 1921.

Alex Bittelman refers to the merging of the followers of these two revolutionists as *"an historic event of the first magnitude."*

> "For the first time in the history of the American working class there came to an end the traditional separation between the advanced revolutionary elements of the trade unions on the one hand, and the revolutionary elements of the Socialist (political-parliamentary) Party on the other. This traditional separation was perhaps the largest single factor that had retarded, in the past, the coming into life in the U.S. of a proletarian revolutionary party of the Leninist kind. Ruthenberg and Foster started the liquidation of this separation by coming together in the building of the Communist Party in the United States."*

We love and admire our Comrade C. E. Ruthenberg. On our twentieth anniversary we remember his great role, first, as a builder of the Left wing in the Socialist Party; second, as a fearless fighter against the World War; third, as the most hunted labor man in that era; fourth, as a founder of the Communist Party; fifth, as the leader who held together that Party and fought for its right to exist as a legal party, and, lastly, as a fine human personality who laid down his life, through overwork and neglect of self, in the service of the Party he loved. When he was taken ill in New York he should have gone directly to a hospital. His comrades realized he was in great pain and begged him to do so. But there was a meeting scheduled in Chicago which he felt he must attend. Peritonitis de-

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* Alex Bittelman, *Milestones in the History of the Communist Party*, p. 91, Workers Library Publishers, New York.

veloped from a burst appendix. He fought gallantly to live, but when he knew death was inevitable he met it with the same smile he had met all his battles. His last words, on March 2, 1927, were: *"Tell the comrades to build the Party. Let's fight on!"*

# Conclusion

*"Not he is wise who makes no mistakes. There are no such men nor can there be. He is wise who makes not very serious mistakes and who knows how to correct them easily and quickly."—Lenin.*

NONE of these three great leaders of yesterday were perfect. They made mistakes, had human weaknesses and shortcomings. Their integrity, courage and devotion indicated they were "of a special mold, of special material" which made them vanguard leaders of the advanced American workers over a span of four decades. They were spearheads for the masses, from whom they drew their strength. We study their lives to understand better the past, as lessons for the present and inspiration for the future. The past is the background, the starting point, the youthful experiences, of the labor unions and the Communist Party. We trace the early path of these three great leaders, workers and sons of workers, Americans and sons of "immigrants and revolutionists," through many struggles, to where they converged on the long and glorious road towards socialism. Our feet are now set firmly upon that road.

We are celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the *Communist Party of the U.S.A.* We are confident there is a shorter distance ahead of us than lies behind us. The road has been tramped firm, even and wide by the feet of our forerunners. It is broader and cleaner for the rubbish and weeds they cleared away. They showed us many pitfalls, and will-o'-the-wisps to avoid. The light on the path is

stronger and more penetrating; our destination, *the World of Tomorrow,* which is *Socialism in America,* lies more clearly ahead of us, because of them.

The Communist Party of the U.S.A. was born out of the Socialist Party in the struggle led by Ruthenberg against the imperialist war and in which Debs and Haywood joined wholeheartedly. It was a struggle that placed all three within prison walls, which undermined their health and shortened their lives, but which left us the heritage of a "new type of party." The Communist Party of the U.S.A. was born out of the boundless enthusiasm and firm determination of all *real* Socialists in America to welcome and support the Russian Revolution and the Socialist Soviet government which it ushered in.

Debs, Haywood and Ruthenberg gave their unqualified support to the overthrow of tsarism, of landlordism, of capitalism, and the defeat of armed intervention in Russia. They had *faith* in the working class, faith in their intelligence, their courage. They are united in our memory by this faith in the people to bring about socialism in our country, as elsewhere. We sorrow that our dear comrades were cut down before they saw the amazing accomplishments of the workers and peasants in building socialism in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. We have the heritage of a Party that carries on its work with the same *"faith in the power of the working class and in the inevitability of its victory,"* and is strengthening that faith of the workers in themselves, to achieve socialism.

Before we take our backward glances from the road behind and leave our beloved comrades to their well-earned rest, let us honor their memory by pledging to them to build strong the Communist Party of the U.S.A. which has inherited from them, and countless others of the past, the best and most militant traditions of the American working class.

We pledge to you—Comrade Eugene V. Debs, our great agitator—that we will follow you in *"stirring up the people."* Above all other qualities, you bequeathed to us your burning resentment against the sufferings, the poverty, the misery, the degradation, the exploitation of the people. You bequeathed to us the love and admiration of a great heart, for the intelligence, the solidarity, the strength of the workers, which you so eloquently urged them to use for themselves and not for others. You bequeathed to us your hatred and contempt of those who live in luxury and idleness on the wealth created by the labor of the workers, on the land, in the mines, in the factories, in the shops and on the railroads. You bequeathed to us your purpose to agitate the people to throw the shirkers off their backs, to emancipate themselves, to build socialism. We celebrate our twentieth anniversary by pledging to emulate you in your deep and passionate feeling with and for the people, to be *agitators* for their liberation, for peace and democracy, against fascism, against imperialist war.

We pledge to you, Comrade William D. Haywood, our lion-hearted warrior, that we will follow you *in fighting* in the struggles of the people. Above all other qualities, you bequeathed to us the will to struggle. You never withheld a blow in defense of *democratic rights,* the rights to organize, to strike, to make demands; *civil liberties*—the right to speak, to assemble, to write, *the right to unions of their choice,* industrial unions, of skilled and unskilled, black and white, men and women, native and foreign born, one big union, to fight against the industrial overlords of America. Mighty blows you struck against the mine owners, the textile barons, the rubber trust, the lumber interests, in the determined attempts of workers to fight monopoly capital in its ruthless grabbing of all the great resources

of America. You bequeathed to us your fighting spirit, and we pledge to you, on this our twentieth anniversary, to emulate you in your militant, grim determination in the cause of the people. We pledge to you that we will emulate you as *fighters* against all enemies of the people, those who rob them, exploit them, lie to them, betray them. We will never forget that "The world belongs to the workers!"

We pledge to you, Comrade C. E. Ruthenberg, founder and organizer of our Communist Party of the U.S.A. that we will follow you in your final admonition to "Build the Party!" You bequeathed to us an understanding that agitation and struggle are not enough, that a *will to power* must be created in the people. They erupt spontaneously and expend themselves fruitlessly unless they are guided by a permanent clear-visioned organization. You bequeathed to us your personal example of the coordination of an agitator, a fighter and an organizer for a real socialist party—the Communist Party, in America. You bequeathed to us a confidence in the importance of Party work, in binding together the struggle for the immediate needs of the people with the struggle for the ultimate aim—their complete emancipation. You bequeathed to us the example of a brave leader, willing to bear the brunt of all struggles, never asking of others what you were not ready to do yourself—modest, unassuming—fearless and untiring. We pledge to you on this our twentieth anniversary that we will emulate you in uniting agitation, struggle and organization, to build the Communist Party as a living instrument for your inflexible purpose—*the World of Tomorrow—Socialism in America.*

"For you the night, for us the fight!" we must now say to our dear comrades. The struggles in the present, against

the forces of imperialism and fascism, within our country as well as abroad—for peace, security and happiness—press us forward toward socialism. Only under such an equitable economic system as socialism, will permanent peace be possible for all peoples. *"Right now"* is the link between the past and the future. The present is the period of motion, of activity. The past is gone, the future is on the forge of time. What comes forth is determined by what we do. We must utilize our glorious militant traditions, which come to us out of the past, from men like Debs, Haywood and Ruthenberg. As they fell they passed their tasks into the capable hands of younger and trusted co-workers.

Today we have men with determination, courage and revolutionary devotion equal to the forerunners, in William Z. Foster and Earl Browder, Chairman and Secretary of the Communist Party of the U.S.A.

Earl Browder was born in Kansas, in 1892, of old American pioneer stock which goes back to pre-revolutionary days. He belonged to the Left group of the Socialist Party. Like Debs and Ruthenberg, he became active in the trade unions in his birthplace, edited a Socialist paper there which fought against the war, and, like Debs, Haywood and Ruthenberg, he was sent to prison. He was in Leavenworth Prison when the Left wing was formed but, unlike Debs, he joined the Communist Party on his release, at the age of twenty-eight.

He has been tremendously effective in the utilization of the pen, the radio, and the platform to bring the program of the Party before the American people. His keen analysis of politics, national and world events, and of our American history have been living contributions to the arsenal of the toiling masses in their struggle for a better world.

He is frank and fearless, tells the exact truth about the

Party, neither exaggerates its strength nor minimizes its weaknesses; and has steered the Party out of the morass of all factionalism, into a clarified, mature Bolshevik Party. He has enhanced the leadership of the Communist Party among the workers, the youth, the farmers, the Negro people, the women and the "white collar" workers, which gives the Party a prestige and influence far beyond its actual numerical strength. Earl Browder is bold and courageous, simple and unassuming, with a sense of humor, and a capacity for work and study—a fitting successor to Debs and Ruthenberg, as leader of the real Socialists of America in 1939.

William Z. Foster was a contemporary of Debs and Haywood, in the pioneer days of industrial unionism. Today he is the greatest living American authority on unionism, its theory, structure and methods of struggle. His articles on organization and strategy are handbooks for progressive members of both the A. F. of L. and the C.I.O.

Born in Massachusetts in 1881, of Irish immigrant parents, Foster, like Debs and Haywood, went to work at the early age of twelve, and was involved in strikes before he was twenty. He spent many years at varied occupations, as a migratory worker and sailor, and has described his many thrilling experiences in *Pages from a Worker's Life.**

He left the Socialist Party to become a member of the I.W.W., and later severed his connections with it because he opposed "its fanatical dual unionism," which isolated the progressives from the A. F. of L. He demonstrated his tactics by carrying on the campaigns to organize the packinghouse workers in 1917 and the steel workers whom he led in the great strike of 1919. After the Russian Revolution and his visit to the Soviet Union in 1921, Foster

* Published by International Publishers, New York.

joined the Communist Party. To confine the class struggle to the union field, to ignore the state, to oversimplify the revolutionary struggle by overestimating spontaneous struggles, to ignore the political tendencies of the workers in America became major errors after the clarifying experience of the Russian Revolution, and Foster threw them overboard with scant ceremony.

The various groups and tendencies, which were still in a formative stage with Debs, Haywood and Ruthenberg, are fused and tempered into one whole in Browder and Foster and the Communist Party they lead harmoniously. There is no longer any cleavage between "the union forces" and the "political forces" in the Party. This healthy merging and unifying is so complete that even the terminology of yesterday's schisms is forgotten. Under the joint leadership of Foster and Browder, the "political" Socialist and "industrial" Socialist are one and indivisible in the Communist of today.

> "The history of the C.P.U.S.A.," Earl Browder states, "is, on its twentieth anniversary, the history of the creation of a Bolshevik Party within the stronghold of world capitalism, the history of the emergence of the American working class as a self-conscious force in American life, the history of the preparation of the American people for struggle against fascist world conquest and imperialist war, the history of the first stage in preparing America for socialism. . . . We set ourselves the task to win the respect and allegiance of the majority of the American people, as the precondition for socialism in our country. We have complete confidence in our ultimate success."*

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* Earl Browder, "Some Remarks on the Twentieth Anniversary of the Communist Party of the United States of America," in *The Communist,* September, 1939, p. 803.

With the fire of Debs, the pugnacity of Haywood, the efficiency of Ruthenberg, repeated in Browder and Foster, and the C.P.U.S.A., we can say with Lenin: "Despite all trials, the future is ours."

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